



An association of U.S. Travelers to Cuba

[respect@respectassociation.org](mailto:respect@respectassociation.org)

## Mission Statement

RESPECT (Responsible and Ethical Cuba Travel) is a U.S. professional association uniting nonprofit entities, travel agents, tour operators and other travel service providers dedicated to practicing and promoting ethical and socially responsible travel to Cuba.

## Principles

Members of the Association agree to uphold the following principles in organizing travel to Cuba:

1. We understand that the opportunity to visit Cuba is a step towards promoting mutual understanding and learning, through firsthand respectful exchanges, contributing to more informed, pro-active and responsible global citizenship on the part of all concerned.
2. We frame our Principles in the context of the internationally agreed-upon UN Sustainable Development Goals and respect for Cuba's path to sustainable development, as determined by Cubans themselves.  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>,  
<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgooverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>)
3. "First do no harm" – the cornerstone of medical ethics worldwide – is fundamental to the principles that guide our organizations and those who travel to Cuba with us, respecting historical sites and natural areas and leaving them as we find them without disturbing their peace and sanctity .
4. We encourage our travelers – before they travel – to learn about Cuba and its history from a variety of sources, including Cuban sources.

5. We are committed to transparency in our relations with all Cuban entities and people, accurately and honestly representing ourselves and our intentions.
6. We affirm our commitment to respect all Cubans, without regard to skin color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, political persuasion, abilities or economic status.
7. We are committed to upholding non-exploitative relationships with Cuban entities and people, and respect for policies and laws enacted to prevent discrimination and exploitation of all kinds.
8. We promote healthy and respectful travel to Cuba and vehemently oppose “sex tourism” and associated businesses in any form, all of these prohibited by Cuban law.
9. We are committed to support Cuba’s efforts to confront climate change and protect the environment, actively contributing to conservation of energy and water resources, as well as protection of urban and rural landscapes, flora, fauna, beaches and marine life.
10. We will respect the authenticity of Cuban culture, its heritage, multiple roots and manifestations, as well as the cultural contributions of the Cuban people to world culture. We will consciously help to care for and maintain the country’s UNESCO-identified World Heritage Sites and other monuments and sites that constitute part of Cuba’s cultural patrimony.
11. We will abide by Cuban laws and regulations pertinent to our travel, including but not limited to immigration and customs regulations.
12. We are committed to protecting the health of our travelers and the Cuban people, by doing our part to keep infectious diseases and prohibited drugs from entering Cuba.
13. We encourage travelers to purchase products made in Cuba particularly from those who contribute to local development efforts, giving back to their communities.
14. We uphold the rights of travelers and their hosts in Cuba to be treated with respect and dignity, and commit ourselves to addressing issues of concern in this area through established mechanisms between the Association and its Cuban counterparts, in a spirit of constructive dialogue and joint reflection.
15. We believe all US citizens and residents have the right to travel to Cuba, and advocate lifting all US governmental travel restrictions to the island.
16. As an Association, we encourage our members’ efforts to support travel to Cuba by people of modest means, making the island a destination for the many, not just the few.
17. The Association supports Cuba’s contribution to the Caribbean as a zone of peace, and as a safe and peaceful destination for all travelers.